

LITTLE Egham Town, Spartan League champions, gave Wycombe Wanderers quite a fright in Saturday's F.A. Cup second qualifying round tie at Charta Road. A goal up after 32 minutes, they bravely held on to their lead until half time before eventually being taken apart by a crushing spell of three goals in four minutes.

In the end, the class of Isthmian League champions Wycombe brought a predictable result with six goals in the second half. But for the first 45 minutes, the Egham "Minnows" outfought Wanderers who after a frantic opening assault, were generally held in check.

Egham had never seen anything like it. The crowd of over 2,000 broke the ground record of 1,500 with spectators bordering all round the pitch. And the fairy tale setting looked like coming true when Doug Hazlegrave gave them a shock lead.

At half time there was an atmosphere of surprise, to say the least, around the ground. Could Egham do it? Could they hold onto their lead and perhaps snatch another goal? Wycombe's answer was quick and simple.

Tony Horseman put them on level terms after only three minutes of the new half and then Mick Holifield (twice) and Keith Searle made it an astonishing 4-1 inside four minutes. Keith went on to record his first hat trick of the season while poor Egham were left to ponder on what might have been.

In the first quarter, Wycombe tore into the home defence and should have scored at least twice. But a combination of an uneven, bone hard pitch and poor finishing saw Town weather the early storm.

Derek Gamblin set up an early chance for Keith Searle and two minutes later, Holifield blazed over the top after Horseman had snaked through the defence. It was the usual story. Accurate passing, good running off the ball but the final goal touch just would not come.

Town's first reply was after 16 minutes when a Brian Myers' flick saw McCormack lob the ball just wide of Kevin O'Brien's goal. Kevin was in the side for John Maskell, whose wife was injured in a car accident last Thursday.

With the ageing Jim Hartridge, the king pin of the home defence, Egham grew in confidence and Myers, another veteran campaigner, gave Olson

STUART EARP reports

Egham T. 2, Wycombe W. 6

and Delaney plenty to think about in the air. Once again, Delaney went through an unhappy 90 minutes, often beaten to the high ball.

A rising drive from Archer brought a good save from O'Brien after 25 minutes as Egham began to emulate their seniors' example with some neat interpassing.

Seven minutes later Myers engineered a shock goal for the Spartan champions. He dispossessed Delaney and centred low and hard to Hazlegrave at the far post who slid the ball just inside the upright. Two minutes later Terry McCormack beat Olson and, with O'Brien stranded in no man's land off his line, sent the ball across an open goal.

It was Town's last chance of the half. Wycombe began to get back into the game again, Mick Holifield using his speed to make deep thrusts into Egham territory. The Blues won their first corner just on half time, Town having previously been awarded two.

The corner tally in the second half of 6-0 told the story. From the whistle Wycombe at last threw off their shackles and began to play the football they are capable of. And the man who prompted their revival was Gamblin, once again in superb form.

Derek, who recently retired from International amateur football for personal reasons, made the first goal for Tony Horseman. Staying close to the touch line, he beat two men with a clever change of pace before crossing for "Bodger" to net with a diving header.

Three minutes later Holifield, in the side in place of Tony

Amos, crashed a header against the cross bar and Delaney nodded the rebound over the top. Then Ellery cleared off the line from Pritchard.

Under such concerted pressure Egham's overworked defence just had to crack again and sure enough, after a four minute spell, Town found themselves 4-1 down.

After 16 minutes Gamblin laid on the second goal, taking the ball to the by-line before crossing for Holifield to deflect the ball home in off the far post from the narrowest of angles.

A minute later Larry Pritchard put Holifield through the defence with a measured header, Mick showing his pace before cracking the ball past the helpless John Missen. Egham's hurried clearances were eagerly snapped up by Johnny Hutchinson and Pritchard, who soon set the Blues attack going again.

After 65 minutes Searle scored the first of his trio with a speculative 25 yard shot. The centre forward was given far too much time and room to place his shot just inside the post with Missen diving too late to stop the danger.

Poor Egham were overcome by the speed and accuracy of it all. With Gamblin playing virtually as an orthodox winger and Pritchard spraying pinpoint passes around the field, Wanderers produced superb flowing football — just what the crowd had come to see.

The Blues made it 5-1 after 69 minutes when the Egham back four stood arms aloft as Hutchinson ran onto a pass from Gamblin (again). Hutch's cross was missed by Holifield but Searle made no mistake,

crashing the ball into the roof of the net.

Town brought on Phil Keefe for Stan Lovell after 76 minutes and he did much to halt Wycombe's now dominant attack. Although never troubling O'Brien for the majority of the second half, Egham managed to slow the tempo and hold Wycombe at bay until the 81st minute.

Wanderers finished off their scoring spree with a brilliant goal by Searle. A long cross from Ian Rundle was met first time, Keith sending the ball streaking past Missen on the half volley for his well earned hat-trick.

After the goal, Gamblin was given a great ovation as he was replaced by Alan Gane. Although allowed far more room to move than usual, Gamblin had produced some memorable football.

Johnny Hutchinson almost made it seven when he unleashed a goal-bound drive. But Missen flung himself full length to tip the ball away for a corner.

Nobody denied Egham a second goal in injury time when Keefe took advantage of some hesitancy in the Blues' defence to clip the ball past O'Brien with a neat shot on the turn.

As expected Egham were well beaten. But they never gave up trying and never once resorted to foul play to halt the rampant Wycombe attack.

EGHAM TOWN — J. Missen; S. Lovell (sub, P. O'Keefe, 76 mins), I. Ellery, J. Bailey, J. Hartridge, P. Archer, T. McCormack, R. Stroud, B. Myers, P. Bending, D. Hazlegrave.

WYCOMBE — K. O'Brien; I. Rundle, D. Gamblin (sub, A. Gane 82 mins), G. Olson, J. Delaney, R. Williams, M. Holifield, L. Pritchard, K. Searle, A. Horseman, J. Hutchinson.

Referee: D. Miles.

Half-time: 1-0. Goalscorers: Egham—Hazlegrave (32), Keefe (91); Wycombe—Horseman (48), Holifield 2 (61, 62), Searle 3 (65, 69, 81).

Attendance: 2,000 approx.